

INTRODUCTION



A Letter to Our Clients;

ANIMALS ENRICH OUR LIVES

People who own pets live longer, happier, fuller lives. Our pets remind us of what it is to be wild, to be gentle, to be loyal, to trust, to flourish, to slow with age, to die. They connect us to something fundamental in our beings. We are the caretakers of that connection. For all that our pets teach us, for all the love and joy they bring to our lives, they deserve good care - and they rely on us to give it.

WHY LIFETIME VETERINARY CARE MATTERS

The average lifespan of dogs and cats in the United States is 7.4 years. The POTENTIAL lifespan of the average dog or cat in the United States is 15 years. Comprehensive medical care, good nutrition and proper training allow pets to live up to their potential as long term family members. In other words, the care you give your pet throughout its life will determine how long he or she will remain a happy, healthy member of your family.

Our goal is to maximize the lifespan and the health of your dog or cat through preventative medical care and nutritional and behavioral counseling. We are advocates for your pet - our job is to advise you as to the best care options available for you and your pet.

Working together as a team we hope to help our patients and their families spend many happy years together.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Bloss



Dr. Denise Follett



Dr. Nicole Mueller



Dr. April Wittenburg



Dr. Molly Lien

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FIRST AND FOREMOST: VACCINATIONS

Many common diseases, including Distemper, are deadly to your cat. During the initial day of nursing, kittens receive **antibodies**, proteins, against certain diseases from their mother's milk. These protecting antibodies are gradually lost between 6 and 16 weeks of age. A series of vaccinations are given during this period to stimulate your kitten's immune system to produce its own antibodies. This "passive" immunity protects the kitten during its first few weeks of life, while its immune system is maturing, but, at some point, this immunity fails and the kitten must produce its own, longer-lasting "active" immunity. Vaccinations are used for this purpose. As long as the mother's antibodies are present, they will cause interference and prevent the immune system from responding completely to the vaccines. Even if your cat never goes outside, many viruses are quite hardy, and can be carried to your cat on your hands, shoes or clothing. Make sure your pet is protected!

We recommend a vaccination schedule that protects against feline distemper, two upper respiratory infections, feline leukemia and rabies as follows:

6-8 weeks

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia (DCR #1)

9-12 weeks

DCR #2, Feline Leukemia (FELV) Test & FELV #1

12-16 weeks

DCR # 3, FELV #2

3-4 months

Rabies

Feline leukemia is a deadly disease that is spread directly from cat to cat, and from mother cats to their kittens before or shortly after birth.

As many as 40% of cat deaths annually are due to Feline Leukemia and related viruses.

A blood test for FELV once your kitten reaches 9 weeks of age will determine if your cat or kitten has been infected. If the test is negative, two initial vaccinations, 3-4 weeks apart will prevent Feline Leukemia in your cat. Your pet will receive a booster at about one year of age, and yearly if your cat goes outside, is boarded, or has contact with other cats. We will also recommend a test for the FIV virus, a related viral illness for kittens obtained at 6 months of age or older.



Kittens will receive booster vaccinations at one year of age. Currently subsequent DCR vaccinations will be good for three years. FELV and RABIES need annual boosters. In recent years with new vaccine technologies and ongoing research into vaccine duration, vaccination protocols have begun to change. Chances are good that vaccine recommendations will change again over the next ten years. As your cat comes in for annual physical exams we will inform you of any new vaccines and vaccination schedules.

ADVERSE REACTIONS TO VACCINATIONS



Adverse reactions to vaccination have been recognized for years, and were commonly seen in several human vaccines including polio and smallpox vaccines. Adverse reactions to vaccines also occur in cats and dogs. However, compared to the risks of not vaccinating cats and dogs, the risks associated with vaccinations are very small in comparison. Adverse effects from vaccinations can vary with the type of vaccine used, and the age and breed of animal vaccinated. Anaphylaxis and the development of a fibrosarcoma are the most serious reactions to vaccines. Some of the more common (but still rare) risks are discussed below.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a rare, life-threatening, immediate allergic reaction to something ingested or injected. If untreated, it results in shock, respiratory and cardiac failure, and death. An anaphylactic reaction can occur as a result of vaccination. The reaction usually occurs within minutes to hours (less than 24) of the vaccination. Dr. Ronald Schultz of the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine estimates that about one case of anaphylaxis occurs for every 15,000 doses of vaccine administered.

The most common symptoms of anaphylaxis are the sudden onset of diarrhea, vomiting, shock, seizures, coma, and death. The animals' gums will be very pale, and the limbs will feel cold. The heart rate is generally very fast, but the pulse is weak. There can be facial swelling.

Anaphylaxis is an extreme emergency. If you think your cat or dog is having an anaphylactic reaction, seek emergency veterinary assistance immediately. Epinephrine should be given as soon as possible - we are talking within a few minutes. IV fluids, oxygen, and other medications are given as needed.

Anaphylactic reactions are more commonly associated with the use of [killed vaccines](#) such as [rabies](#) and [feline leukemia virus](#). Killed vaccines have more [virus](#) or bacterial particles per dose, and have added chemicals (adjuvants) to improve the pet's immune response. These characteristics also increase the risk of an allergic reaction to the vaccine.

If your pet has ever had a reaction to a vaccine, subsequent vaccinations should be given by your veterinarian. In some cases, certain vaccines may be excluded from your pet's vaccination regimen, a different type of vaccine will be used, or certain drugs, including antihistamines may be given prior to vaccination. The veterinarian may place a catheter in the pet's vein so if a reaction does occur, medications and fluids can be given immediately. Depending on the situation, your pet may need to remain in the veterinarian's office for a period of 30 minutes to several hours. Once home, the pet should be kept under observation for several additional hours. Even with these precautions, life-threatening reactions could still occur.

Vaccine-associated sarcoma

A fibrosarcoma is a tumor of the connective [tissue](#). These tumors tend to invade deeply into the underlying tissues. The frequency of these tumors is increasing in cats and has led researchers to believe some of the tumors may be caused by a local reaction to a vaccine. Although these tumors are seen more frequently, they are still rare. Current estimates on the incidence of these tumors are about one tumor per 10,000 to 30,000 cats vaccinated. These tumors are most commonly associated with the feline leukemia vaccine.

A national Vaccine-Associated Feline Sarcoma Task Force composed of veterinarians, researchers, and vaccine manufacturers are working to determine the exact cause of these tumors and how they can be prevented and treated. Possible explanations for the tumors include abnormal reactions to the [adjuvant](#) in vaccines, genetic predisposition, and infections with another virus.

The possible risk of vaccine-associated fibrosarcomas has led to a reevaluation of vaccination protocols. This is why it is recommended that cats without potential exposure to FeLV may not need vaccination against that disease. In cats with potential exposure, the risk of FeLV infection is greater than the risk of developing a sarcoma, so vaccination is advised.

A small, painless swelling sometimes develops at the site of a recent vaccination. This should disappear in several weeks. If it persists, however, it could mean it is developing into a sarcoma and should be checked by your veterinarian. The Vaccine-Associated Feline Sarcoma Task Force advises the warning signs for a vaccine-related fibrosarcoma are:

- A lump persists for more than three months after vaccination.

- It is larger than two centimeters in diameter (2.5 centimeters = 1 inch).
- One month after vaccination it is still increasing in size.

If you have any concern regarding a lump at a vaccination site, do not hesitate to contact your veterinarian.

If a vaccine-associated fibrosarcoma develops, surgical removal is attempted, but generally, this tumor is so invasive it is difficult to remove it all. Radiation or chemotherapy are often recommended in combination with surgery.

Generally, the FeLV vaccine is now given in the left rear leg, in an area distinct from where other vaccinations are given. If a tumor would develop, knowing which vaccine was given where will help us determine with which vaccine the tumor is associated. Also, if a tumor would develop, amputation of the leg would, in many cases, be curative. Cats do incredibly well on three legs, and many owners prefer this to having their cat succumb to a tumor.

Discomfort and swelling at the injection site

Pain, swelling, redness, and irritation can occur at the injection site. These effects generally occur within 30 minutes to 1 week of the vaccination. If the signs persist, or are severe, contact your veterinarian.

Occasionally, abscesses can form at the injection site. These abscesses are generally not caused by infection, but by the body's over-reaction to the vaccine.

Mild fever, decreased appetite and activity

Mild fever, decreased appetite, and depression may be observed for 1-2 days following vaccination, most commonly when modified live vaccines are used. Generally, no treatment is warranted.

Severe reactions can also occur, if any of a vaccine made for injection accidentally enters an animal's eyes, nose, or mouth.

Lameness

Rarely, lameness can result from several different vaccinations. Kittens vaccinated with a modified live calicivirus vaccine may develop lameness within 3 weeks of the vaccination. Some kittens may also develop a fever and lose their appetite. These symptoms generally last 3-4 days, and depending on severity, may be treated with fluids, antibiotics, and pain medication.

Birth defects or infections

The vaccination of pregnant animals with a modified live vaccine can result in birth defects or abortions. It is recommended that modified live vaccines NEVER be given to pregnant animals. In addition, vaccinating kittens and puppies less than 4-5 weeks of age, can actually result in them becoming infected and developing disease from modified live vaccines.

Summary

As with any medical procedure, there are always risks of adverse reactions or side effects. These risks must be compared to the benefits of the procedure. Many of the diseases against which we vaccinate can be serious and even lethal. In almost all cases, the risks associated with vaccination are very small compared to the risk of developing disease. As new vaccines and methods of administration become available, the adverse risks of vaccination should be reduced even more.

INTESTINAL PARASITES



95% of kittens are born with intestinal worms! These parasites can cause vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, stunted growth and even death. Some kinds, especially roundworms, are also transmissible to humans. **There are 10,000 cases of animal parasites causing disease in children every year in the United States.**

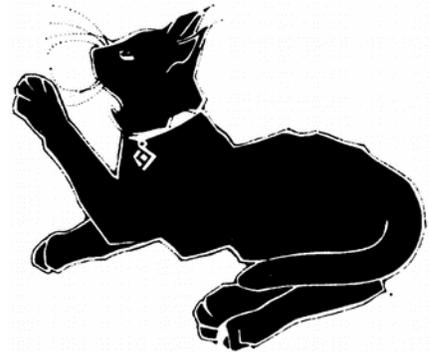
Internal parasites are diagnosed by having a fresh stool sample examined under a microscope by a Certified Veterinary Technician here at the veterinary hospital. This should be done as part of a health exam when you obtain a new kitten or cat, and on a yearly basis as part of your cat's annual health exam and vaccinations.

Try to collect the freshest sample you can and keep it refrigerated until you can bring it in to the veterinary hospital. Stool samples will keep up to 24 hours if kept cool (NOT FROZEN). Presence of litter will not affect testing.

So that you may better understand the problems internal parasites can cause and what signs to look for, we have included a short description of the five most common types of internal parasites.

ROUNDWORMS . . .

are the most common type of worm. They are 2-3 inches long and resemble strands of spaghetti. They live in the small intestine, and may cause vomiting, diarrhea and weight loss. This parasite is most commonly transmitted via the stools of other cats or dogs. Mother cats can also pass these worms to their unborn kittens. They pose the most significant risk to human health.



HOOKWORMS . . .

are small, fine worms which attach to the walls of the small intestine and live by sucking blood from the cat. They cause severe diarrhea, which may be bloody, and anemia, especially in kittens and young cats. Hookworms are usually transmitted by contact with infected stools

of other cats or dogs, or via the uterus or mother's milk. They can be transmitted to people through the soles of bare feet.

TAPEWORMS . . .

also live in the small intestine, where the head attaches to the intestinal wall and produces a chain of segments. Mature segments containing eggs are passed with the stool, or may be seen around the rectum. They resemble small grains of rice. They may be acquired through the ingestion of rodents or birds or, more commonly, through the ingestion of fleas. Flea control is essential to control tapeworm infestation. It can be difficult to detect them on fecal testing.

COCCIDIA . . .

are one celled protozoal parasites, more like bacteria rather than "worms." Kittens can pick these up from their mother and they can also be acquired by eating rabbit or other wildlife droppings. They are treated with antibiotics.

GIARDIA . . .

are also protozoans. They are very difficult to pick up on a regular stool check. Antibiotics or special wormers kill them but they are difficult to eradicate completely and often flare-up with stress or other intestinal problems. They are contagious to humans and cause vomiting and diarrhea in both people and pets.

If a stool sample is positive for parasites, your veterinarian will prescribe an effective dewormer and set up an appropriate deworming schedule for you to follow to ensure eradication of all parasites. We usually recommend deworming twice, two weeks apart, however, this will vary with the type of parasite found. Please weigh your animal before picking up any wormer, to ensure that the proper dose is given. A stool sample should be checked again 4 to 8 weeks later, and again possibly 3 months later to ensure that your pet is not being reinfested by his or her environment. Clean the litter box daily as well.

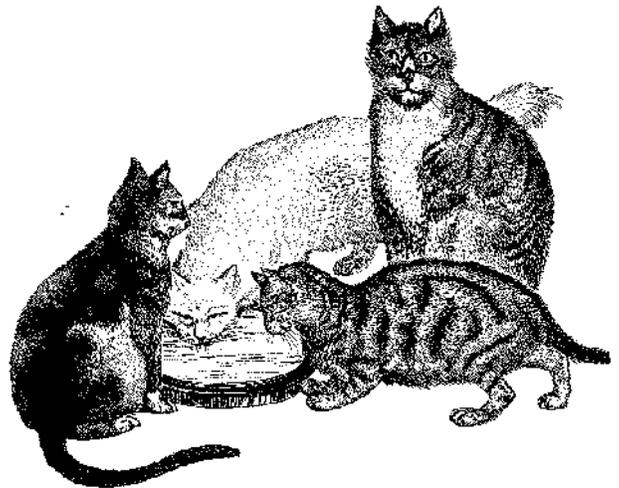
Even if fecal testing does not detect intestinal parasites, because intestinal parasites are common in young kitten and puppies and there is the potential for human consequences, the Center for Disease Control recommends deworming of all puppies and kittens at least two times.

HEARTWORMS IN CATS



Heartworms are being found more frequently in cats. Heartworms are less common in cats than in dogs, but cats can get them too. Affected cats usually have only a few of these worms in their heart, but because the cat's heart is very small and the worms are quite large, even 1 or 2 worms can be fatal. Signs of heartworm disease in cats include chronic coughing, wheezing or vomiting and sudden collapse or death. Diagnosis is made based on clinical exam, laboratory, findings and x-rays. **There is still no treatment for cats that have heartworm disease, so prevention is key!**

Outdoor cats are most at risk, but interestingly enough a new study of feline heartworm disease in Texas and South Carolina showed that 36% of infected cats were kept totally indoors. Since it takes so few of the heartworm parasites to cause disease in cats, even the occasional mosquito finding its way into the home can carry more than enough heartworm larvae to be fatal.



Luckily, cats can now be put on the once a month preventative medication during the mosquito season, just like dogs. Though effective preventative medications have been available for dogs for years, more than 1/3 of dogs in our area are not being protected. Many of them are harboring the heartworm parasite. Mosquitoes then carry the disease from infected dogs to other pets, and occasionally to people as well.

Heartgard® for cats is a chewable, good tasting tablet your cat should like. The price is quite reasonable, and the medication also helps prevent roundworms and hookworms - common intestinal parasites - as well. Alternately, a topical product called Revolution® can be applied to the skin at the top of the neck once monthly. This will help prevent heartworm, fleas, hookworms, roundworms, and ear mites. This is ideal for the outdoor cat, as well as the indoor/outdoor cat.

Cats are exposed to lots of other diseases, so you need to decide on a total health care package for any cat, especially one that goes outside. We recommend vaccination for Distemper, the upper respiratory diseases and Rabies for all cats, indoors or out. Feline Leukemia vaccination is also recommended. Cats going outdoors should also be protected against fleas and intestinal parasites as part of a regular health care program. If you have a cat who is special to you, you may want to start him or her on the new once a month preventative medication as well. It could save a life! Ask for medication at the front desk when you check out.

ELECTIVE SURGERIES



NEUTERING / SPAYING

The average lifespan of a neutered / spayed pet is 40% longer than that of an unneutered / unspayed one. Unspayed females can develop breast cancer or severe uterine infections by the time they are 8-10 years of age. Unspayed female cats also are in heat frequently, about every 3 weeks, during which time they are noisy and troublesome to live with. Worst of all, millions of unwanted kittens are euthanized in this country every year because there aren't enough homes for them all.

Unneutered male cats over the age of 9 months have very strong smelling urine, which they like to spray in the house to mark their territory. They are also prone to wander in search of female cats and are also very territorial. These traits lead to high rates of death from being hit by cars, fight wounds and exposure to deadly contagious viral infections. Male cats are also, of course, equally responsible for pet overpopulation.

We recommend spaying (surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus) of female cats, and castration (surgical removal of the testicles) of males, for all pets that will not be used for purebred breeding. This should be done when your animal reaches 6 months of age. (Male cats can be neutered earlier while they are being declawed.) Your animal will be a healthier, happier pet, and you will have done your part to reduce the pet overpopulation problem.

While your pet is anesthetized we can also remove any retained baby teeth and implant a microchip ID. This is a helpful way to identify your pet should he or she become lost or stolen.

DECLAWING

Many people who keep their cats indoors prefer to have their front paws declawed.

Occasionally, we will declaw all four feet, but this is seldom necessary. There are four options that you should consider: frequent nail clipping, nail shields, surgical declawing, and tendonectomy.

The nails may be clipped regularly (we can show you how). However, your cat's nails will re-grow and become sharp again within a few days. Therefore, to protect your property, it will be necessary to clip them one to two times per week. You must provide scratching posts or your cat will use the furniture.

There are some commercially available products that are called nail caps. These are generally made of smooth plastic and attach to the end of the nail with special glue. The nails are still present, but the caps prevent them from causing destruction. After two to four weeks the nails will grow enough that the caps will be shed. At that time, you should be prepared to replace them.



Surgical declawing is the removal of the nail at its base. This is done under general anesthesia and requires an overnight hospitalization. There is very little post-surgical discomfort, especially when it is performed on a kitten.

Contrary to the belief of some, this surgery does not cause lameness or psychological damage. Actually, a declawed cat will not realize the claws are gone and will continue to "sharpen" the claws as normal without inflicting damage to your furniture. This surgery can be done as soon as your kitten has started his or her vaccination series, has been tested for internal parasites, and weighs at least two pounds or anytime thereafter.

Please decide early if you want your cat declawed. The earlier the better. It can also be done the same time as spaying or neutering. Once declawed, your cat should always live indoors since the ability to defend itself is compromised.

Tendonectomy is the surgical removal of a small part of the tendon on the bottom of each toe. This tendon is needed to make the nail extend. The cat retains its nails, but it cannot extend them for sharpening and scratching. There are two disadvantages to this procedure. One is that the nails continue to grow. Therefore, the nails should be clipped every seven to fourteen days; if not, the nails may grow into the pads of the foot. Additionally, there is some loss of structure to the toes. The toes may splay, causing abnormal stress on the joints of the toes. Subsequent arthritis is of concern. It is generally recommended as an option in older cats.

MICROCHIPPING

THE LATEST IN PET IDENTIFICATION AND RETRIEVAL IS MICROCHIPPING. THIS TINY DEVICE IS IMPLANTED WITH A NEEDLE SO THE PROCESS IS MUCH LIKE GETTING AN INJECTION. VETERINARY HOSPITALS, HUMANE SOCIETIES AND ANIMAL SHELTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE MICROCHIP SCANNERS USED TO DETECT THE PRESENCE OF A MICROCHIP AND YOUR CAT'S UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION. A NATIONAL REGISTRY ASSISTS IN THE RETURN OF MICROCHIPPED PETS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT ALL PETS BE MICROCHIPPED.

□

BEFORE YOUR CAT'S UPCOMING SURGERY



Many people have questions about various aspects of their pet's surgery and we hope this handout will help. It also explains the decisions you will need to make before your pet's upcoming surgery.

Feeding Prior to Surgery?

It is important that surgery be done on an empty stomach, to reduce the risk of vomiting under and after the anesthesia. You will need to withhold food for at least 8 hours before surgery. Water can be left out until the morning of surgery.

Is The Anesthetic Safe?

Today's modern anesthetics and anesthetic monitors have made surgery much safer than in the past. We do a thorough physical exam on your pet before administering anesthetics to ensure that a fever or other illness won't be a problem. We also adjust the amount and type of anesthetic used depending on the health of your pet. The enclosed handout on anesthesia explains this in greater detail.

Preanesthetic blood testing . . .

is important in reducing the risk of anesthesia. Every pet needs blood testing before surgery to ensure that their liver and kidneys are functioning normally and can handle the elimination of the anesthetic agents given. Additionally, that the patient has a normal blood sugar to ensure normal metabolism by the brain, that the pet is hydrated

and has enough red blood cells to carry oxygen to their tissues. Even apparently healthy animals can have serious organ system problems that cannot be detected without blood testing. If there is a problem it is much better to find it before it causes anesthetic or surgical complications! In animals that have minor dysfunctions anesthesia may be able to be performed by altering amounts and the type used or with the administration of IV fluids during surgery. If serious problems are detected, surgery will be postponed until the problem is identified and corrected. We include preanesthetic blood testing with every spay and neuter surgery. The cost is included in the price of the surgery.

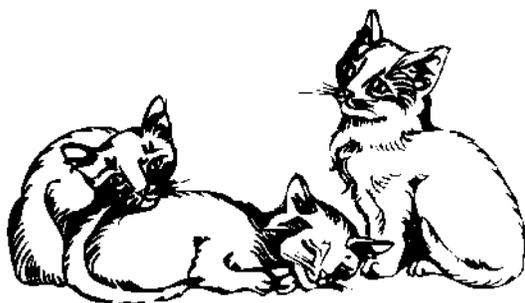
Will My Cat Have Stitches?

Not usually. For most surgeries we use absorbable sutures underneath the skin. These will dissolve on their own and do not need to be removed later. You will, however, need to keep an eye on the incision for swelling, redness and discharge. You will also need to limit your pet's activity level for a time and no baths are allowed for the first 10 days after surgery.

You will also need to limit your pet's activity level for a time and no baths are allowed for the first 10 days after surgery.

Will My Cat Be In Pain?

Anything that causes pain in people can be expected to cause pain in animals. Cat's may not show the same symptoms of pain as people do - they don't usually whine or cry - but you can be sure they feel it. We take pain control for our patients very seriously! **No**



pet should be in pain! It is a well known medical fact that when pain is controlled pets recover faster. Prior to surgery, your pet will receive pain medications, as well as after surgery, as needed. Additionally, pain medications will be dispensed for your pet and should be continued for two to five days after the surgery.

What Other Decisions Do I Need To Make?

While your pet is under anesthesia this is the ideal time to perform other minor procedures which are more easily accomplished when your pet is sleeping. Routinely, your cat's nails will be trimmed at no charge. You may request that one or more of the following

additional procedures be preformed.

- * Cleaning ears
- * Removal of retained baby teeth
- * Implantation of AVID microchip for identification

Charges for these services can be discussed when you schedule your pets surgery, or at the time of drop-off.

The morning of surgery, you will need to have your pet here between 7:30 am – 7:50 am. It will take about 5-10 minutes of time to fill out paperwork and then you will meet briefly with the doctor. We will need a phone number that you can be reached at during that day. When you pick up your pet after surgery you can also plan to spend about 10 minutes with the Certified Veterinary Technician to go over your cat's home care needs.

We will call you the night before your scheduled surgery appointment to confirm the time you will be dropping your pet off and to answer any questions you might have. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to call us with any questions about your pet's health or surgery!

ANESTHESIA AND YOUR PET



Many pet owners worry unnecessarily about anesthesia in their pets. Although anesthesia can never be completely free of risk, today's modern anesthetics make that risk very small.

The same anesthetics that allow complicated surgeries such as heart and kidney transplants to be done on humans are used in pets as well. Even very frail animals can usually be anesthetized safely. In general, the risks from NOT performing a needed procedure, such as dental cleaning or tumor removal, are much higher than the risk from the anesthesia.

We use pre-operative blood tests and radiographs (X-rays) to help us determine whether a procedure will be safe for your pet before it is performed. We require pre-operative blood screening for all pets before anesthesia is administered. Even young and apparently healthy animals can have serious organ dysfunctions that are not evident

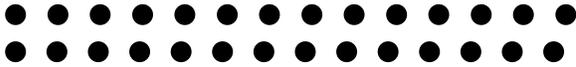
without such testing. For young patients the blood work can be done the day of the procedure. For patients over seven years a more extensive blood panel is performed. We like this done at least a few days prior to better tailor the anesthetic protocol that will be used. Chest X-rays are taken if there is any suspicion of heart or lung disease, or cancer.

During anesthesia your pet will be monitored closely for blood oxygen levels, heart rate and heart beat intensity, throughout the surgery. The anesthesia is always administered by certified and licensed veterinary technicians or doctors to ensure safety and proper dosing. IV fluids may also be given if kidney or liver function is compromised, to ensure your pet's full recovery.

With proper care and monitoring, your pet should go home after anesthesia just as perky and healthy as when he arrived at the hospital, whether he or she is 16 months or 16 years of age.

If you have further concerns about anesthesia in your pet, we would be happy to discuss the risks and benefits of any procedure with you and explain the exact protocol that will be used. Please let us know!

HOW TO CHOOSE A PET FOOD



One of the most common questions we are asked is "What should I feed my pet?" Since the most important contribution you can make to your pet's health and well being is his or her daily diet, it's a question that deserves a good answer.



Think quality! Don't Switch Foods!



Diet is extremely important for growth, and there are two important criteria that should be met in selecting food for your kitten. We recommend a NAME-BRAND FOOD made by a national cat food company (not a generic brand), and a form of food MADE FOR KITTENS. This should be fed until your kitten is about twelve months of age. We recommend that you only buy food that has been certified by an independent organization as complete and balanced. In the United States, you should look for food that has been certified by AAFCO, an independent organization that oversees the entire pet food industry. It does not endorse any particular food, but it will certify that the food has met the minimum requirements for nutrition. In Canada, look for foods approved by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA).

Cat foods are available in dry, canned, and semi-moist formulations. Any of these formulations is acceptable, as long as the label states that the food is intended for growth (or is a kitten food), and is "complete and balanced". This means that the food is nutritionally complete to meet the needs of growth and development. Each of the types of food has advantages and disadvantages.



Dry food is definitely the most inexpensive and can be left in the cat's bowl at all times. If given the choice, the average cat will eat a mouthful of food about 12-20 times per day. The good brands of dry food are just as nutritious as the other forms.

Semi-moist foods may be acceptable, depending on their quality. The texture may be more appealing to some cats, and they often have a stronger odor and flavor. However, semi-moist foods are usually high in sugar, and if they are fed exclusively, can cause

the cat to develop a very finicky appetite. They are also inappropriate for cats with diabetes or at risk of diabetes. We do not generally recommend this type of food.

Canned foods are a good choice to feed your kitten, but are considerably more expensive than either of the other forms of food. Canned foods contain a high percentage of water, and their texture, odor and taste are very appealing to most cats. However, canned food will dry out or spoil if left out for prolonged periods of time; it is more suitable for meal feeding rather than free choice feeding.

Table foods are not recommended. Because they are generally very tasty, cats will often begin to hold out for these and not eat their well-balanced cat food. If you choose to give your kitten table food, be sure that at least 90% of its diet is good quality commercial kitten food. We enjoy a variety of things to eat in our diet. However, most cats actually prefer not to change from one food to another unless they are trained to do so by the way you feed them. Do not feel guilty if your cat is happy to just eat one food day after day, week after week.

DENTISTRY FOR YOUR PET



All of us know about the benefits of routine dental care for ourselves. Daily brushing and flossing, and regular visits to the dentist, keep our teeth and gums healthy and comfortable. Unfortunately, routine dental care is still an often neglected item of dog and cat general health care. Your pets, as well as yourselves, deserve regular dental care.

After your pet reaches a few years of age, plaque begins to build up at the junction of the gums and teeth. With time this plaque hardens into tartar. If this tartar is not removed, it increases causing inflammation to the adjacent gum or gingivitis, that can result in loss of gum tissue. This allows bacteria to come into contact with the underlying tissues and eventual destruction of bone. We call this process periodontal disease. If this situation is not soon remedied, severe gum infections, abscessed teeth and cheek ulcers and eventually loss of the tooth will occur. You may become aware of this problem by noting that your cat has a bad odor to his or her breath, is not eating food as well as previously, or is experiencing weight loss.

Chronic infections of the teeth and gums can also result in problems elsewhere in the body.

Bacteria enter the bloodstream from infected gum tissue and can cause infection in organs such as the liver, the kidneys, the heart and the joints. Good dental care lengthens pets' lives an average of 10 - 20% through the prevention of these secondary problems.

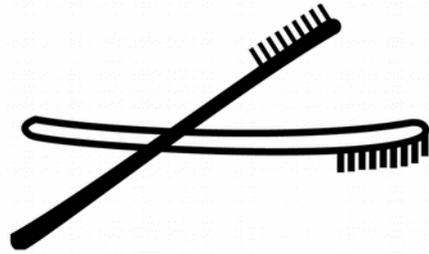
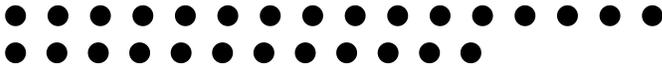
Cats are especially prone to gingivitis and Feline Oral Resorptive Lesions, (FORL's), a painful type of tooth decay that occurs at the gum line and eventually destroys the tooth. As a result of mouth pain cats may stop eating and show weight loss and nutritional disturbances.

You can help prevent dental problems in your pets by feeding a dry cat food. Daily or even weekly brushing of your cat's teeth with a toothpaste made for pets will also help prevent tartar buildup. C.E.T. cat chews are a fibrous edible treats that can be given to cats to assist with this as well.

Just as with people your cat will still require regular dental exams and cleanings (prophylaxis). Under general anesthesia the teeth are examined and probed for gum loss and pockets and for the presence of FORL's. Dental radiographs of individual teeth or the entire mouth may be required to further assess the degree of periodontal disease. The teeth are cleaned of tartar by use of an ultrasonic dental scaler (uses water and rapid sound waves) much like the one your own dentist uses, and then polished. Polishing smoothes the surface of the teeth to help discourage future tartar formation.

Other more advanced procedures such as root canal work, restorations and even braces are also available should your cat ever need them by Board Certified Veterinary Dentists. We encourage you to be concerned about your pet's oral health, and to keep in mind the availability of effective treatments for dental problems in your cat. Make dentistry apart of your pet's total health care plan, for a longer and happier life.

KITTEN BEHAVIOR AND SOCIALIZATION



We would like to congratulate you on the acquisition of your new kitten. Owning a cat can be an extremely rewarding experience, but it is also a large responsibility. We hope this handout will give you the information needed to make some good decisions regarding your kitten.

First let us say that we are grateful that you have chosen us to help you with your kitten's health care. If you have questions concerning any subject related to your kitten's health, please feel free to call our hospital. Our veterinarians and staff will be happy to help you.

Environment

A cat is naturally inclined to investigate its new surroundings. Cats are inquisitive and adventuresome, which frequently gets them into trouble. You will need to cat proof your home just as you would for a toddler, to prevent accidents and illness. It is suggested that the kitten's area of exploration be initially limited so that you can supervise its activities. After confining the cat to one room for the first few days, you should slowly allow access to other areas of the home.

Introduction

Most kittens receive a hostile reception from other household pets, especially from another cat. The other cat usually sees no need for a kitten in the household and these feelings are reinforced if it perceives that special favoritism is being shown to the kitten. The existing cat must not feel that it is necessary to compete for food or attention. The new kitten should have its own food bowl and it should not be permitted to eat from the other cat's bowl. Although it is natural to spend time holding and cuddling the kitten, the existing cat will quickly sense that it is being neglected. The new kitten needs lots of love and attention, but the existing cat should not be slighted. In fact, the transition will be smoother if the existing cat is given more attention than normal.

The introduction period will usually last one to two weeks and will have one of three possible outcomes:

The existing cat will remain **hostile** to the kitten. Fighting may occasionally occur, especially if both try to eat out of the same bowl at the same time. This is an unlikely occurrence if competition for food and affection are minimized during the first few weeks.

The existing cat will only **tolerate** the kitten. Hostility will cease, but the existing cat will act as if the kitten is not present. This is more likely if the existing cat is very independent, has been an only cat for several years, or if marked competition occurred during the first few weeks. This relationship is likely to be permanent.

Bonding will occur between the existing cat and the kitten. They will play together, groom each other, and sleep near each other. This is more likely to occur if competition is minimized and if the existing cat has been lonely for companionship.

Play Behavior

Encouraging appropriate play activities is very important from the first day in your home. Stalking and pouncing are important play behaviors in kittens and have an important role in proper muscular development. If given a sufficient outlet for these behaviors with toys, your kitten will be less likely to use family members for these activities.

Most people who have pets enjoy playing with them and giving them toys. Unfortunately, unlike with children's toys, there are no regulations to ensure that toys made for dogs and cats are safe. Many that are available in pet stores and supermarkets are unsafe.

Check any toy you purchase for parts or pieces that could come off and be inhaled or swallowed. 'Googly' eyes, little bells, small pieces of glued on felt, feathers and strings are some things to watch out for. **Never purchase any toy that looks like it could come apart.**



The best toys are lightweight and movable. These include wads of paper, small balls, and heavy string, rope or ribbon. Kittens should **always** be supervised when playing with string or ribbons because these items can cause serious intestinal problems if they are swallowed. Any other toy that is small enough to be swallowed should also be avoided. Popular toys include little plastic balls with bells inside, the balls that can be batted around inside a large, donut-shaped plastic tube, the long piece of fabric on a stick, and assorted cat nip filled animals. Be sure to throw away any toy that is getting frayed or broken, before threads or pieces are swallowed by the cat.

Whatever toys you choose, it's a good idea to rotate them. Putting a toy away and getting out a different one every few days can help avoid having the cat or kitten get bored with the same old thing. Keeping a cat occupied with a different toy each week

may also prevent him from finding excitement knocking over wastebaskets or scratching the furniture.

Discipline

Disciplining a young kitten may be necessary if its behavior towards people or property is inappropriate, but harsh punishment should be avoided. For most kittens, hand clapping and using shaker cans or horns can be intimidating enough to inhibit undesirable behavior when you are present. However, remote punishment is preferred. Remote punishment consists of using something that appears unconnected to the punisher to stop the problem behavior. Examples include using spray bottles, throwing objects in the direction of the kitten to startle, but not hit, and using booby traps that make loud noises. Remote punishment is preferred because the kitten will then associate punishment with the undesirable act and not with you.

To Prevent Problems:

Spend lots of time playing with your kitten so his energy is used up more constructively. An empty paper bag can give your cats hours of enjoyment! A cat dancer, a string on a pole with an object such as a feather on the end can be waived around while you are watching television. Similarly a focused light source can be pointed on the floor or walls for your cat to chase after. DO NOT play with your kitten by wiggling your fingers or toes - this encourages biting.

Do not hit or strike your kitten for being naughty. This will only frighten or anger him and frequently leads to biting and clawing behavior. Punishment is the least effective training method for cats.

Keep a squirt gun or bottle handy. A squirt of water in the face deters most kittens from doing things they shouldn't do, especially jumping up on counters or playing too aggressively, and it doesn't hurt them.

Never force a kitten to stay in your lap if he or she wants to get down. Do not grab at your cat or scare him, or he may learn to bite. Rough and tumble play also encourages aggression, so play gently, using a toy and not your fingers.

Confine your kitten to one room when you aren't home, one that has no plants or dangerous objects. Swallowing or choking on small objects is very common in cats and kittens. Beware of things such as rubber bands, pencil erasers, needles and thread, small toys, metal objects such as paper clips, scraps of fabric, earrings etc. Anything smaller than 1" diameter can probably be swallowed and needs to be kept out of a kitten's reach. Don't give your kitten string or yarn to play with! These are among the most common causes of potentially deadly intestinal obstructions.

Provide at least one scratching post for your cat to use. Even declawed cats like to stretch and knead their paws. Rubbing catnip on the post will encourage its use, as will keeping it in a handy place where you and the kitten spend a lot of time. Cats usually prefer a larger post that they can climb up and down. Some cats like wood or rope-

wrapped posts instead of carpet. The more your kitten likes his post and the more he is encouraged to use it, the less he will scratch at the furniture or rugs. Use your squirt bottle if you see him scratching where he's not supposed to.

To prevent chewing on cords or shoes, use unscented, roll-on antiperspirant on these items once or twice a week. Cats don't like the drying, bitter taste and will soon shy away.

Try putting aluminum foil around your plant pots or lay sheets of it on counter tops or tables, especially when you can't be home to use your squirt bottle! Cats don't like the shiny, noisy foil and will generally avoid it. Many types of plants are poisonous to your pet, so it's best to keep them all out of reach. Double sided sticky tape works well on couches and chairs - cats don't like the sticky feel on their feet. Just peel the tape off when it's no longer needed.

Be especially vigilant in the laundry and kitchen areas. Laundry soap and bleach are toxic when licked off a cat's paws when they've walked through it. Many cats die each year after exploring the washing machine, taking a nap in the dryer, or jumping on or in a hot stove or oven. Cats are also good at learning how to open cabinet doors!

A collar and ID tag are a good idea, especially if your cat tries to escape outdoors. Use breakaway collars to prevent choking. Microchips are also available now to safely and permanently identify your cat if he or she becomes lost.

To prevent litter pan avoidance be sure the pan is easily accessible and in a quiet place where your cat will feel comfortable. If your house is large it is best to have more than one box.

We also recommend multiple litter pans with more than one cat in the household. Scoop the boxes daily and empty them completely once a week - many cats won't use a dirty litter pan. Avoid heavily scented litters - cats don't like perfume. Never physically punish a cat for going outside the litter box - they quickly learn to sneak and hide their accidents. Many times litter box avoidance is caused by a physical problem such as intestinal parasites, colitis or bladder infection. **Any time a cat stops using its pan he or she should have a physical examination by a doctor.**

If at any time you are having problems with the behavior of your cat, call us right away. Most behavior problems are easily treated if caught in time.

Additional handouts available upon request or on our website:

- Kittens getting off to a good start
- Keeping an indoor cat happy
- Kitten play and investigative behaviors

- Controlling undesirable behavior in cats
- Feline scratching
- Multi-cat household – the pros and cons

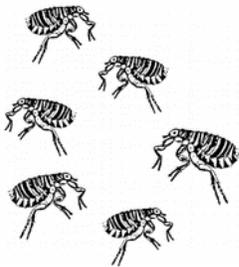
PREVENTING FLEAS AND TICKS



FLEAS



Fleas are among the most common health problems of dogs and cats. In the long run, it is much easier and more cost-effective to prevent fleas on your pets than to have to treat a major infestation of fleas in your house. Regular use of flea products will take care of the occasional flea your pets may encounter in the yard and should prevent you from having to spend large sums of money on foggers and exterminators. Treating a bad flea infestation in your house usually costs upwards of \$150.



Fleas will bite your pets, causing an itchy allergic reaction, which can become quite severe. They carry viral and bacterial diseases. In small animals, especially kittens, the anemia they cause from feeding on the animal's blood can be fatal. They also carry tapeworms. Tapeworm segments appear on the stool or around the rectal area and look like small grains of rice. If your cat has fleas, chances are good he has tapeworms - and vice versa. Therefore, if your cat has fleas, we will deworm your cat for tapeworms along with beginning flea control measures.



Wildlife, as well as other cats and dogs, bring fleas into your yard. Pets and people can then bring the fleas into the house. Birds nesting in the attic or mice seeking shelter can also bring fleas into your home. Fleas also travel on their own as much as a mile an hour. They will hop inside through an open door or window and are often small enough to

come through a window screen. Once inside your home there is no place a flea cannot get to. Adult fleas spend most of their time on your pet, but the remainder of the time they are roaming your house and laying eggs – thousands of them!

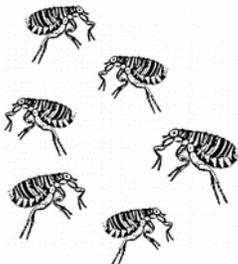
If you've never been lucky enough to see a flea, they are about 1/8 inch long, reddish brown and shaped like a sesame seed with legs. They are usually found on your pet's head, belly or lower back. If you ripple the hair backwards and look at the skin they can be seen scurrying through the base of the hair coat. It is often difficult to find fleas on pets until they are infested heavily. This is especially true with cats who are meticulous groomers. It is more common to see the droppings they leave behind after feeding. They look like grains of pepper. If you place some of these on white paper toweling, wet it and mush it around it will turn the toweling red. This is because flea droppings contain digested blood. Plain dirt stays black or gray when wet.



Prevention



Fleas can usually be prevented by treating all pets that go outdoors so they don't bring reproducing fleas into the house. If you had fleas in previous years it is wise to spray some insecticide in the house as well, especially on the ground floor near doors and windows. This will kill the occasional flea that hops in on its own.

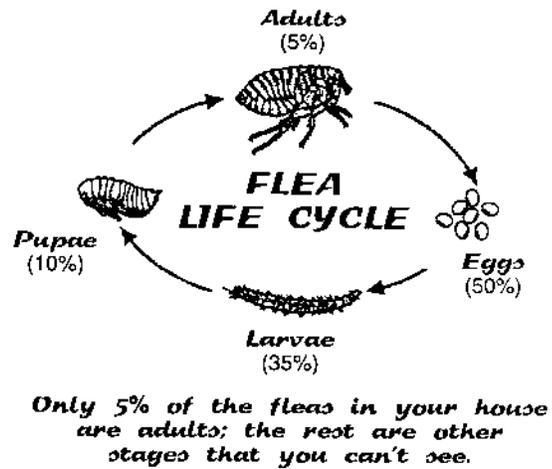


Many flea products sold in grocery and discount stores are wasting your time and money. Some are even harmful to pets. Most compounds strong enough to be effective are sold only through licensed veterinarians and exterminators, who are properly trained in their use, and are regulated by the state and the EPA. Insecticides should be used only according to label directions. Care is needed to ensure that toxicity does not develop due to the concurrent use of other drugs, pesticides or chemicals, or because the compound used was not safe for a particular age or type of animal. Some flea products used for dogs are deadly to cats. **READ LABELS CAREFULLY!!!**

chemicals, or because the compound used was not safe for a particular age or type of animal. Some flea products used for dogs are deadly to cats. **READ LABELS CAREFULLY!!!**

Most of our clients choose a long lasting topical flea control product (Frontline Plus or Revolution) to use on their pet to control fleas. These products are applied to a small area of skin and spread over the whole pet within 24 hours of application. These contain modern polymers enabling them to be effective for as long as 60 days. If your cat goes outdoors we recommend it be used monthly. Frontline is even effective if the cat becomes wet or is bathed. Because the product requires the oils in the animals fur to spread, it is best to apply it several days prior to bathing your cat for maximum effect.

Many insecticidal flea collars available in stores are not very effective and often cause a painful irritation to the skin on the pet's neck. Flea shampoos and soaps are great for cleaning your cat with fleas but they have no residual effect. They only kill fleas present on the pet at the time the bath is given. As soon as the animal dries off, fleas will hop right back on. For long-term control you need a product that safely stays in or on the body for days or weeks at a time.



What's Next???



Congratulations! Your kitten has completed his or her vaccination series and well-kitten exams. We hope that your pet is well on its way to a long and happy life as a member of your family. To keep your kitten healthy for a lifetime will require on-going care. The following list should help you to understand what health care needs your pet will have in the years to come.

The vaccines your kitten has received will provide immunity against disease for about one year. Boosters are needed to keep his/her level of immunity high enough to protect him/her from illness. You will receive reminders in the mail next year when his/her vaccinations are due.

Your pet will also receive an annual physical examination with his/her yearly booster vaccinations. By the time we see your pet again next year he/she will have grown through the equivalent of his/her teenage years and will be a young adult. Because

a pet's lifespan is compressed into a shorter amount of time than that of a human, many changes can occur in your pet's body in the course of a year. The annual physical exam is very important to detect physical problems before they become serious.

Once your pet reaches the age of seven years, annual blood and urine testing are also recommended to detect the onset of age-related illnesses such as hyperthyroidism, kidney and liver disease. **We now see many, many cats that live to be 18 or more years old. Regular veterinary care is the reason why!**

We will also be asking you to bring in a fecal sample from your cat each spring, to test for intestinal parasites which may have been picked up over the course of the year. **Even if your cat doesn't go outside it is wise to have a sample checked.** Some intestinal parasites are picked up by eating rodents (such as a mouse caught in your basement). Others can be dormant in your cat's system and show up later on, even though your pet hasn't been exposed to them recently. A fresh sample will keep about 24 hours if refrigerated. We need about a teaspoon or so. Litter is not a problem if some is stuck on the sample.

Your kitten should be fed a kitten food until he or she is one year old. Then switch gradually to an adult food by mixing the old and new foods together for about two weeks. This helps avoid intestinal upset from changing foods.

Your pet will have a longer, healthier life on a good quality diet, such as Science Diet. Dry food is better for the prevention of dental disease. Too many treats and snacks lead to fussy eating habits, obesity and digestive upsets. Give your pet praise and affection for rewards, not food! They will love you just as much.

Spay or neuter your pet at six months of age. Altered pets live longer, are healthier in their old age, have fewer behavior problems and don't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem.

Your Pet's Age In Human Years

6 months	= 12 years
1 year	= 15 years
2 years	= 24 years
3 years	= 28 years
4 years	= 32 years
5 years	= 36 years
6 years	= 40 years
7 years	= 44 years
8 years	= 48 years
9 years	= 52 years
10 years	= 56 years
11 years	= 60 years
12 years	= 64 years
13 years	= 68 years
14 years	= 72 years
15 years	= 76 years
16 years	= 80 years
17 years	= 84 years
18 years	= 88 years
19 years	= 92 years
20 years	= 96 years
21 years	= 100 years

Your kitten will soon have a full set of adult teeth. Good dental care is essential to your pet's well-being. Regular brushing will slow plaque and tartar build-up as your cat gets older. By the time he/she is two to five years old, however, he/she will probably have enough tartar build-up to begin needing annual dental cleanings here at the veterinary clinic. A cat that gets good dental care throughout its life will live an average of 20% longer than one that doesn't. He/she will also have fresher breath, less pain from periodontal disease and be healthier and more energetic. Start brushing the teeth at about 6 months of age when all the permanent teeth have come in.

Please call us with any questions or problems with your pet. Most medical problems are less costly to your pet's well being and to your pocketbook if they are dealt with early.

The same is true of behavioral problems. The earlier you contact us regarding a problem behavior, the sooner you can solve it. Behaviors such as urine spraying, biting, scratching or clawing the furniture can almost always be changed but you have to ask for help.

Enjoy! Your kitten's boundless joy, love and energy are a precious thing to have!

